

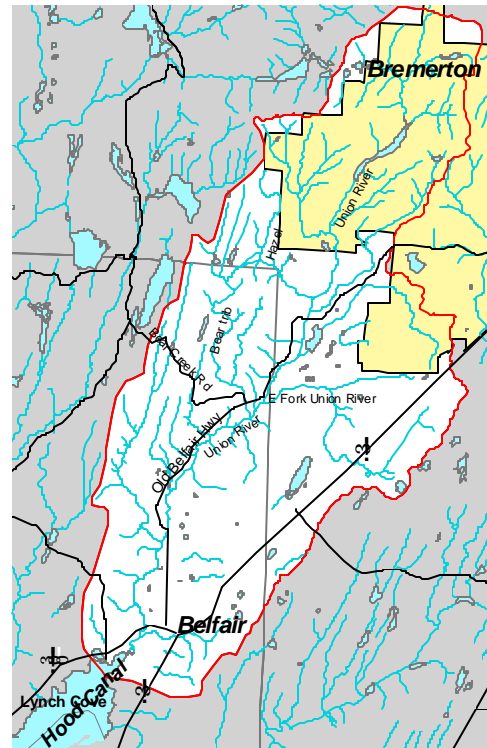
Union River Needs Your Help!



Invitation to comment on how to improve water quality in the Union River Watershed

The Washington State Department of Ecology would like to share with you our draft plan for improving the water quality of Union River. Union River is polluted by fecal coliform bacteria.

OPEN HOUSE MEETING
3 - 5 p.m. & 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Monday, May 13
Theler Community Center
Conference Room 1
East 22871 Highway 3
Belfair, WA



Why is this pollution a problem?

Because Union River is polluted:

- There is an increased risk of illness to children and others when fishing, swimming, or wading.
- Some shellfish beds in Lynch Cove (Hood Canal) are closed to harvest because of bacteria contamination.

All of us contribute to the problem. There are too many fecal coliform bacteria, which come from humans, our horses, dogs, cats, and other animals.

What can you do?

Everyone has a role to play. First, we need to hear your comments on the draft plan. At the open house, you will have the opportunity to ask questions and submit comments. You can talk with members of Ecology, local health districts, and watershed community groups, such as the Lower Hood Canal Watershed Implementation Committee, to learn more about the current activities and how we can help you to:

- Properly maintain your septic tank;
- Keep soaps, fertilizers, and pet wastes out of the river; and
- Improve agricultural practices to keep runoff from manure piles, fertilizers, pesticides out of the river.

Federal law requires cleanup of polluted waters

Federal law requires states to identify sources of pollution in waters that fall short of water quality standards, and to determine how much pollution needs to be reduced for the water body to remain healthy. This Water Cleanup Plan is part of the federal process of setting total maximum daily loads, or TMDLs, for waterbodies that are on the Clean Water Act 303(d) list because they are polluted.



What is in the Draft Water Cleanup Plan?

The Water Cleanup Plan identifies:

- The fecal coliform problems and causes in the watershed.
- The level of fecal coliform bacteria that can be allowed to ensure Union River waters are healthy.
- Actions that are needed, or already underway, to reduce fecal coliform bacteria levels.

You may comment on the draft plan at the open house or in writing from April 29 until May 30, 2002. Once the public comment period has ended, Ecology will incorporate the input it receives and then submit the plan to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for approval.

What comes next?

After EPA approval, Ecology will work with all basin stakeholders to develop a *Detailed Implementation Plan* that lists the specific activities needed to reduce bacteria levels in Union River. There will be more opportunities for public involvement at that time. Let us know if you want to be kept informed of future activities.

Getting a copy of the Water Cleanup Plan

You can obtain or view a copy of the draft plan at the open house (Theler Center), North Mason Timberland Library (Belfair), Bremerton Library, Ecology's Bellevue Office, or on the Internet at:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/tmdl/watershed/index.html#nwro>.

Please send written comments by May 30, 2002 to:

Sue Sweet
Department of Ecology
Water Quality Program
3190 - 160th Avenue SE
Bellevue, WA 98008-5452
or email <mailto:sswe461@ecy.wa.gov>

To obtain this information in alternative formats or for other special accommodations, please call at (425) 649-7037 or (425) 649-4259 (TDD).